

**CATAWBA COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN**  
**ANNEX D**  
**EMERGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION**

**I. PURPOSE**

This annex presents a plan of action to provide prompt, authoritative and understandable emergency information to the public for natural, technological, and civil disturbance emergencies.

**II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS**

A. Situation

1. The County is vulnerable to a variety of hazards. Media outlets exist which, if effectively employed, can be used to inform the population of the events that are occurring and how they may best respond to them.
2. The county is served by the news media outlets listed in ANNEX D, APPENDIX 1.
3. During periods of emergency, the public needs and generally desires detailed information regarding protective action to be taken for minimizing loss of life and property. There are times, however, when disaster strikes without warning and the public information system cannot react rapidly enough to properly inform the public about the hazard. For this reason, it is important that prior to the occurrence of an emergency, the public is made aware of potential hazards and the protective measures that can be employed.
4. The public may accept as valid rumors, hearsay, and half-truth information which may cause unnecessary fear and confusion.

B. Assumptions

1. Local print and broadcast media will cooperate in broadcasting and publishing detailed disaster-related instructions to the public.

2. Depending on the severity of the emergency, telephone communication may be disrupted. Local and regional radio/television stations without emergency power may also be off the air. If this occurs, public address systems on emergency vehicles and door-to-door sweeps may be initiated.
3. Demand for information may be very heavy; therefore, sufficient staff will be provided and trained.

### **III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

#### **A. General**

1. Emergency Public Information (EPI) efforts will focus on specific, event-related information.
2. This information generally will be of an instructional nature focusing on such things as warning, evacuation, and shelter. It also is important to keep the public informed of the general progress of events. A special effort will be made to report the facts as accurately as possible and provide advice concerning necessary protective actions. Rumor control will be a major aspect of the information program and will operate from the EOC.

#### **B. Execution**

1. Ongoing public education programs will be conducted to increase public awareness of potential hazards and necessary responses.
2. The County Public Information Officer (PIO) will coordinate with County media to provide information and education programs relating to emergency management.
3. Emergency Public Information documents for major hazards will be prepared and maintained during normal periods of readiness. When evacuation is imminent, public information will expand its capabilities to answer public inquiries and prepare new or modified public announcements.

4. The Catawba County Public Information Office will coordinate, as needed, a bank of phones to assist county residents with problems associated with the disaster.
5. Support staff to the public information officer will come from different county agencies, who will reassign staff to be used temporarily. Expansion and demobilization of this assignment will be made depending on demand of the general public.
6. The Public Information Officer will coordinate locations and time for press briefings and releases. A briefing room will be set up for this purpose and the location will be determined at the time of the disaster.

#### **IV. DIRECTION AND CONTROL**

- A. General - The Public Information Officer, at the approval of the county manager or emergency management coordinator, is responsible for all news releases and public information disseminated at the County level. In times of emergency the Public Information Officer will operate from the EOC if appropriate.
- B. Educational and Public Information Programs - The Public Information Officer will provide the media with information on new developments affecting emergency management. The Public Information Officer also will utilize other types of information and programs on emergency management such as delivering lectures or presentations, organizing tours of the EOC, distributing education brochures and showing films.

#### **V. CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT**

The line of succession is:

1. Public Information Officer
2. Assistant Public Information Officer
3. Emergency Management Coordinator

**ANNEX D  
APPENDIX 1  
MEDIA OUTLETS**

Piedmont News Department  
Charlotte Observer  
P. O. Box 32188  
Charlotte NC 28232

Morganton News Herald  
P. O. Box 280  
Morganton NC 28655

Radio Station WEZC  
137 S. Kings Drive  
Charlotte NC 28204

Radio Station WSOC AM/FM  
P. O. Box 34665  
Charlotte NC 28234

Community Affairs  
WBT, WBCY Radio  
1 Julian Price Place  
Charlotte NC 28208

Catawba Valley Cable TV  
News Department  
1121 Lenoir-Rhyne Blvd., SE  
Hickory NC 28601

WHKY TV  
P.O. Box 1059  
Hickory NC 28603

FOCUS  
264 First Avenue, NW  
Hickory NC 28601

WXRC & WIRC Radio  
357 First Avenue, NW  
Hickory NC 28601

WNNC Radio Station  
West "A" Street  
Newton NC 28658

Community Calendar  
WPCQ-TV  
P. O. Box 18665  
Charlotte NC 28218

Community Affairs  
WSOC-TV  
P. O. Box 34665  
Charlotte NC 28234

County News Enterprise  
P. O. Box 48  
Newton NC 28658

Hickory Daily Record  
116 Third Street, NW  
Hickory NC 28601

Catawba Valley Neighbors  
261 Second Avenue, SE  
Hickory NC 28601

Observer News Enterprise  
P. O. Box 48  
Newton NC 28658

Hickory News  
270 Union Square  
Hickory NC 28601